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ECA/PE/CE, AF/PD FOR PATRICIA EHRNMAN AND KATHARINE MOSELEY

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OEXC](#) [IS](#) [JO](#) [KPAO](#) [LE](#) [RW](#)
SUBJECT: SPORTS ENVOY REQUEST

REF: A. STATE 153793
[1](#)B. STATE 165437

[1](#)1. Post welcomes the possibility of participating in the ECA sports program in FY08 and is pleased to submit this request for a Sports Envoy in field of basketball. With an enthusiastic audience for the program, a low crime rate, excellent climate, and meticulously clean environment, post believes Kigali would make an excellent venue for a Sports Envoy program. Preferred program dates are anytime during the month of July when Rwandan students are on school holiday.

[1](#)2. Basketball is a fast growing sport in Rwanda, the NBA and its stars are increasingly popular among young Rwandans, and sports are an extremely important outlet for kids in a country with few recreational facilities. Post is confident of its ability to organize a highly successful program and has the enthusiastic backing of the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Sport for this endeavor. More than 60 percent of Rwanda's population is under the age of 18 and Rwanda's genocide left the country with one of the highest levels of orphaned children in the world, making youth outreach programs especially important and meaningful. The Sports Envoy program provides an excellent opportunity to diversify and extend our youth outreach programs. As a focus country for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), post provides extensive support to orphans and vulnerable children across the country and also reaches out to youth with targeted HIV/AIDS behavioral change communication programs and voluntary counseling and testing initiatives. Post would seek opportunities to utilize the Sports Envoy program to advance the objectives of these existing programs and vice versa.

[1](#)3. Rwanda has fledgling men's and women's professional basketball leagues and has also developed under-21 national sides. Basketball is also widely played at Rwanda's universities and in youth centers around the country. Post would draw on these communities to identify youth to participate in the program. Despite its rapidly growing popularity, basketball does not have deep roots in Rwanda. As a result there is a critical shortage of trained coaches at all levels of the game. For this reason, post proposes to organize a clinic for local coaches in addition to a series of drills and teambuilding activities for youth.

[1](#)4. The Embassy's primary partners in this initiative would be the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Sport and the Rwandan Basketball Federation. As indicated, the Ministry has already endorsed this proposal. Post previously was approached by the Basketball Federation with a request to support clinics for local coaches; we are confident, therefore, that the Federation would be equally enthusiastic about this program. The primary venue for the clinics would be the 3,000 seat national basketball/volleyball stadium in Kigali.

15. It is rare that Rwanda has the opportunity to host internationally recognized sports personalities. Local TV, radio, and print media would be eager to cover all aspects of the program.

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